DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 106 860 CS 202 068

AUTHOR	Trithart, Lee; And Others
TITLE	1971-72 Tryout of the Level 2 Composition Skills Exercises.
INSTITUTION	Southwest Regional Laboratory for Educational Research and Development, Los Alamitos, Calif.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Education (DHEW), Washington, D.C.
REPORT NO	TN-3-72-35
PUB DATE	Oct 72
NOTE	47p.
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.76 HC-$1.95 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS	*Composition (Literary); *Educational Research; Elementary Education; *English Instruction; Language Arts; *Program Effectiveness; Teaching Guides; Writing Exercises; *Writing Skills
IDENTIFIERS	*Composition Skills Program

ABSTRACT

Level 2 of the Southwest Regional Laboratory (SWRL) Composition Skills Program is designed to help children achieve writing fluency and elementary punctuation skills. This report describes the results of the 1971-1972 developmental tryouts of the program in a wide range of school locations. Data obtained from the tryout corroborated data obtained from previous tryouts concerning the overall effectiveness of the program and provided additional information for program revision. Proposed program revisions are described and the revised teacher's guide is included. (Author)

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FD106860

SWRL SOUTHWEST REGIONAL LABORATORY
TECHNICAL NOTE

DATE: October 16, 1972

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1971-72 TRYOUT OF THE LEVEL 2 COMPOSITION SKILLS EXERCISES

Lee Trithart, Edys Quellmalz, and Fred Niedermeyer

Level 2 of the SWRL Composition Skills Program is normally used in first grade and is designed to be coordinate with the SWRL Second-Year Reading Program. Initial formulation of the program began during the Fall of 1969. The first tryout took place in 14 classes during the last five months of the 1969-70 school year, and provided extensive performance data demonstrating the effectiveness of the program (Sullivan, Okada, and Niedermeyer, 1971). On the basis of the initial tryout, revisions were incorporated into the program and the second tryout occurred in the 1970-71 school year in an additional 14 classes. Evaluation of this tryout was limited to teacher feedback concerning the program revisions (Okada and Baker, 1971). After routine editing the materials were again tried out during the 1971-72 school year in eight first grade classes encompassing a wide range of school locations and conditions. This report describes the Level 2 program, the tryout procedures, and the results. A discussion of the results and a listing of revisions are also included.

METHOD

Outcomes

Level 2 of the SWRL Composition Skills Program was designed to teach the following skill areas of composition writing:

WRITES
1. with increasing fluency
2. good, interesting, well-expressed stories

EDITS compositions for

3. appropriate word spacing
4. word omissions
5. sentence-initial capitalization
6. capitalization of proper names
7. sentence-final punctuation

Materials

To achieve the program outcomes instruction was presented in a series of 64 sequenced writing lessons that presented progressively less structured writing formats and required children to write with increasing fluency. Each of the 64 lessons was developed to coordinate with one of the 64 fiction stories of the SWRL Second-Year Reading Program. Both sets of lessons were based on identical reading vocabulary. Plots, characters, and story sequences in the two programs were unrelated.

Composition Skills lessons were presented in the form of a story with accompanying pictures. The stories were incomplete in that the sequence of lesson formats required students to write progressively more words and sentences to successfully complete the stories. Initial exercises had one or more words missing from the sentences of the story and required the student to select the most appropriate word or words to complete the sentences from among given choices. Later exercises required children to supply their own words and phrases to complete the sentences of the story. For these and subsequent lessons, SWRL Word List Booklets containing the words from the Reading Program in an alphabetized list accompanied the standard lesson materials to facilitate spelling and variety of word usage. In later lessons one or more

sentences were gradually deleted from the story text so that lengthier and more complex responses were required to complete the story. The final exercises in the program consisted of a sequence of four illustrations and required the children to write the entire story accompanying the illustrations.

The exercises were designed to require a minimum of teacher supervision once a new lesson format or outcome was introduced. Specific teaching procedures were written on each exercise. In addition to these directions for specific lessons, teachers received a Teacher's Guide that described materials, general teaching and follow-up procedures, SWRL tryout requirements, and a description of the coordination between the Reading Program Fiction Stories and the Composition Skills Exercises.

Sample

Level 2 of the Composition Skills Program was tried out in a total of eight first-grade classes. To determine how well the program would operate in a variety of school settings, the tryout schools were selected to represent a wide range of socio-economic and minority-group populations. The chart on Page 4 indicates the distribution of the classes according to school, district, socio-economic level, and predominant ethnic composition. All classes using the Level 2 Composition Skills Program were also using the Second Year Reading Program.

District*	Number of Classes	Socio-Economic Level	Predominant Ethnic Composition
A	2	upper-middle-income suburban	White
B	2	lower-middle-income suburban	White
C	1	lower-income inner-city	Mexican-American
D	3	lower-income inner-city	Black

*one school per district

For each of the four tryout schools a class in a comparison school was designated. Comparison schools were similar to tryout schools on the basis of socio-economic level, ethnic composition, size, and geographic location.

Procedures

Prior to the initiation of the Program, teacher training sessions lasting approximately 45 minutes were conducted at each school by the Laboratory staff. Teachers were given materials and Teacher's Guides at this time. The outcomes and materials of the program were described and examined, and teaching procedures were presented and discussed.

Teacher-training sessions took place during late October of 1971. Teachers were to begin the first Composition Skills exercises when their classes reached Book 1 Story 1 of the Second-Year Reading Program. Pacing of Composition Skills lessons was contingent upon the scheduling of Reading lessons. The rate required for completion of the Program was two lessons in each program per week. Additionally, 25 minutes

of instructional time plus 5-10 minutes of follow-up time was to be allotted for each Composition Skills Program lesson.

Data Sources and Testing Procedures

Pupil Performance Tests. In late October and early November the eight tryout and four comparison classes were pretested. In late May the same 12 classes were posttested. All testing was conducted by SWRL staff members.

Pre- and posttests were in two parts: the first part required students to write five sentences from dictation and the second part required them to write a composition in response to directions and an illustration. Dictated sentences were designed to elicit use of the full range of editing outcomes (punctuation and capitalization skills) from students. The pictures and directions accompanying the composition task were designed to elicit a story containing both narration and dialogue. Children were given 15 minutes in which to plan and write their stories and were given five minutes for editing what they had written. Pre- and posttest sentence dictation and comparison items were drawn from the same item pools. A copy of the pretest and of the instructions used by the test administrator can be inspected in Niedermeyer, Quellmalz, and Trithart, 1972. A copy of the posttest and of the procedures used by the test administrator are contained in Appendix A.

Sentences dictated were scored for word spacing, sentence completeness, capitalization, and ending punctuation using procedures established during a previous study (Labeaune, Niedermeyer, and Sullivan, 1971). Stories written by the children were analyzed for

writing fluency and sentence correctness by simply counting words and sentences, procedures also previously established (Labeaune, Niedermeyer, and Sullivan, 1971). Story quality was assessed by three types of subjective ratings on six-point scales: (1) overall quality, (2) originality, and (3) organization, using procedures established during a previous study (Niedermeyer, Quellmalz, and Trithart, 1972). The agreement correlation between two SWRL staff members scoring a sample of 15 pretest compositions was .89 for overall quality, .91 for originality, and .88 for organization. The agreement between three staff members scoring a sample of 15 posttest compositions was .91 for overall quality, .87 for originality, and .86 for organization. In addition, stories received a classification according to type of organization using procedures previously established (Niedermeyer, Quellmalz, and Trithart, 1972). Stories were categorized as organized according to chronology, space, plot, argument, or other criteria, or as a no response. The agreement correlation between two SWRL staff members classifying a sample of 15 pretest compositions was .89. The agreement between three raters classifying a sample of 15 posttest compositions was .87.

Because the test-scoring procedures for Levels 1, 2, and 3 of the Composition Skills Program involved a considerable amount of staff time, random samples of ten children from each tryout and comparison class in each district were selected for analysis. Thus the sample of first-grade students whose composition skills were analyzed consisted of 80 children (ten children randomly selected from each of the tryout and control groups in each of the four classes) on pretest and posttest. To insure

that raters had no knowledge of tryout and comparison classes, tests were coded and randomly sequenced prior to scoring.

Pupil Preference Inventories. A random sample of 38 tryout and 20 comparison group children (five from each of the tryout and comparison classes in each of the four districts) was interviewed by SWRL staff members, using the tryout or comparison group Pupil Preference Inventory. Each child was interviewed individually and asked to state whether he liked various activities "a whole lot," "a lot," "just o.k.," or "not at all." Eight of the items (five related to general writing activities and three related to non-writing activities) were identical on the tryout and control inventories. Four additional questions appeared only on the tryout inventory and concerned specific types of lessons in the Level 2 Program. Copies of the Pupil Preference Inventory for both tryout and comparison classes are contained in Appendix B.

Lesson Observations. During the tryout, classroom lessons were observed by staff members on a regular basis. Procedures for systematically documenting these observations were operationalized (Niedermeyer, 1972). Essentially these procedures required the observer to write a summary of all that was seen and heard during the lesson, following each observation. Inferences about pupil attitudes and teacher performance, and implications for program materials and procedures were then recorded on the report form. In all 22 lessons were observed and documented at the first-grade level.

Teacher Questionnaires. Letters were sent to all the Level 2 teachers near the end of the school year (late May) thanking them for their participation in the program and requesting them to fill out the

Teacher Questionnaire for program evaluation. The questionnaire was designed to elicit specific comments, criticisms, revision suggestions, and teacher attitudes toward the program. A copy of the questionnaire which shows the responses of the six teachers who completed their questionnaires is contained in Appendix C.

RESULTS

Scores presented in this section have been summed across the four districts tested. However, for Tables 1-5 in this section, corresponding tables showing the data arrayed by district may be found in Appendix D.

Pupil Performance

Table 1 presents the pretest and posttest percentages of correct responses on editing outcomes (Outcomes 3-7, Page 2) as measured through the sentences dictated to the first grade tryout and comparison classes. From the data in Table 1 it may be seen that the percentage of correct responses on each editing outcome was higher for tryout classes on posttest dictated sentences than it was for comparison classes.

Table 2 indicates pretest and posttest means and standard deviations of total words and sentences in stories written by first-grade tryout and comparison classes (Outcome 1). As may be seen, tryout children progressed from an initially lower mean number of words per composition, 4.22 as compared with 9.85, to a higher mean number of words per composition on the posttest, 31.77 as compared with 23.78. On the number of sentences written per composition, the tryout classes likewise progressed from an initially lower mean, .65 as compared with 1.20, to a

Table 1. Percentages of Correct Responses on Editing Outcomes as Measured Through Dictated Sentences

Outcome Measured	Tryout Classes		Comparison Classes	
	Pretest	Posttest	Pretest	Posttest
3. Spacing: All words present discernible as distinct units	42	77	42	58
4. Sentence complete: All words present	51	93	45	63
5. Initial Capitalization: Correctly capitalizes initial letter of sentence	44	72	35	60
6. Capitalization: Correctly capitalizes proper names	10	65	5	19
7. Ending Punctuation: Correct ending punctuation	6	47	5	20
Number of subjects	40	40	40	40

Number of items responded to by each subject on each editing outcome: sentence complete, 5; spacing, 5; initial capitalization, 5; capitalization of proper names, 2; ending punctuation, 5.

Table 2. Means and Standard Deviations of Total Words and Sentences in Stories

Outcome Measured		Tryout Classes		Comparison Classes	
		Pretest	Posttest	Pretest	Posttest
1. Number of Words	$\bar{X}$	4.22	31.77	9.85	23.73
	s.d.	5.48	22.49	9.40	23.21
1. Number of Sentences	$\bar{X}$	.65	2.90	1.20	2.70
	s.d.	.80	2.31	1.11	3.65
number of subjects		40	40	40	40

slightly higher posttest mean, 2.90 as compared with 2.70.

Table 3 shows pretest and posttest percentages of complete sentences, sentence strings, sentence fragments, and run-on sentences in stories written by first-grade tryout and comparison classes (Outcomes 4, 5, and 7). This table differs from Table 1 in that the outcomes were assessed in a constructed-response, story context, rather than in dictated sentences. There is very little difference between the two groups when employing these outcomes in a story context.

Table 4 contains the pretest and posttest cumulative percentages of subjective ratings of quality, originality, and organization of the stories written by the first-grade tryout and comparison classes (Outcome 2). The principle differences in the two groups are that (1) there were no posttest tryout students who did not attempt to respond to the composition task, whereas 25 percent of the comparison students wrote nothing, and (2) on ratings of overall quality, originality, and organization, a consistently higher percentage of posttest tryout students (53, 72, and 54 percent respectively) wrote compositions in the "3" through "5" range (fair or better) than did students in the posttest comparison group, for whom the figures were 35, 47, and 35 percent.

In Table 5 the pretest and posttest percentages of types of organization in stories written by the first-grade tryout and comparison classes may be seen (Outcome 2). Corresponding figures are approximately the same for the two groups with the exception of the higher percentage of posttest tryout students, 75 percent, who wrote compositions

Table 3. Percentages of Complete Sentences, Sentence Strings, Sentence Fragments, and Run-On Sentences

Outcome Measured	Tryout Classes		Comparison Classes	
	Pretest	Posttest	Pretest	Posttest
4. Complete Sentences	46	65	44	70
5., 7. Sentence Strings	0	3	2	0
4. Sentence Fragments	38	14	37	12
5., 7. Run-On Sentences	16	18	17	18
number of subjects	40	40	40	40

Table 4. Cumulative Percentages of Subjective Ratings of Quality, Originality, and Organization of Stories

	Tryout Classes						Comparison Classes					
	Pretest			Posttest			Pretest			Posttest		
	Overall Quality	Originality	Organization	Overall Quality	Originality	Organization	Overall Quality	Originality	Organization	Overall Quality	Originality	Organization
Excellent	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0
Good	0	0	0	5	42	22	0	0	0	5	32	7
Fair	5	0	0	53	72	54	0	2	5	35	47	35
Somewhat Inadequate	17	15	15	88	92	72	28	20	20	55	65	53
Extremely Inadequate	35	33	33	100	100	100	60	52	55	75	75	75
No Response	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Number of Ss	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40
Coefficient of agreement	.89	.91	.88	.91	.87	.86	.89	.91	.88	.91	.87	.86

Table 5. Percentages of Types of Organization in Stories

	Tryout Classes		Comparison Classes	
	Pretest	Posttest	Pretest	Posttest
Chronological	12	75	23	48
Spatial	0	0	0	0
Plot	0	0	0	2
Arguemnt	2	0	2	0
Other	18	25	30	25
No Response	68	0	45	25
number of subjects	40	40	40	40
Coefficient of agreement	.92	.87	.92	.87

chronologically organized compared with 48 percent of the posttest comparison students. The difference in the percentages of posttest tryout and comparison students in the "No Response" classification has already been noted.

Pupil Preferences

Tables 6 and 7 display the percentage distributions for how well the tryout and comparison children stated they liked various activities on the Pupil Preference Inventory. As may be seen from examination of corresponding items in the two tables, the tryout classes evidenced a generally more positive attitude toward all school activities, writing and non-writing, than did the comparison classes. The tryout classes also showed a high degree of preference for activities related to the specific materials in the Level 2 Program (Items 2, 5, 8, and 11).

Lesson Observations and Teacher Questionnaires

Lesson observations and teacher questionnaires yielded much information concerning use of the Level 2 Program at the first-grade level. This information is summarized below according to various categories.

Pacing. The percents of participating tryout students having completed different portions of the Level 2 Composition Skills Program may be seen in Table 8. Forty-five percent of the participating students in the tryout classes had completed the program or were working within the last eight lessons. An additional 55 percent were still working at different stages. Fifteen percent of the students in the tryout classes were non-participants. Since lessons were suggested for scheduling at the rate of two per week, students who were not

Table 6. Percentage Distribution of Pupil Preference Inventory Responses by 38 Randomly-Sampled First-Grade Children in Eight Tryout Classes

	In school this year did you ever..?		Do you like to..?		Do you like it..?		
	yes	no	yes	no	a whole lot	a lot	just o.k.
1. write words?	100	0	100	0	24	42	34
2. write words that fit into sentences like these? (Show Stories 5 & 12.)	97	3	100	0	38	38	24
3. listen to other boys and girls share things they've brought to school?	97	3	97	3	50	36	14
4. write sentences?	97	3	97	3	38	31	31
5. choose words and write them in the numbered spaces like these? (Show Stories 17 & 26.)	89	11	100	0	44	21	35
6. read stories?	100	0	97	3	43	30	27
7. write a story that tells about a picture?	89	11	94	6	44	28	28
8. write your own words in spaces to finish sentences like these? (Show Stories 35 & 44.)	92	8	97	3	42	29	29
9. draw pictures with crayons or paint?	95	5	100	0	69	20	11
10. make up titles for the stories you write?	87	13	94	6	42	23	35
11. write stories on papers like this? (Show Stories 61 & 64.)	66	34	96	4	33	17	50
12. write your name?	100	0	100	0	55	13	32

Table 7. Percentage Distribution of Pupil Preference Inventory Responses by 20 Randomly-Sampled First-Grade Children in Four Comparison Classes

	In school this year did you ever..?		Do you like to..?		Do you like it..?		
	yes	no	yes	no	a whole lot	a lot	just o.k.
1. write words?	100	0	95	5	5	32	63
2. listen to other boys and girls share things they've brought to school?	95	5	95	5	22	45	33
3. write sentences?	90	10	100	0	17	44	39
4. read stories?	85	15	100	0	24	35	41
5. write a story that tells about a picture?	90	10	94	6	18	35	47
6. draw pictures with crayons or paint?	100	0	90	10	39	44	17
7. make up titles for the stories you write?	75	25	100	0	27	46	27
8. write your name?	100	0	100	0	20	35	45

Table 8. Percents of Participating Students in Tryout Classes Having Completed Different Portions of the Level 2 Composition Skills Program*

Number of Lessons	Percents of Pupils Completing
57-64	45
49-56	29
41-48	7
33-40	14
25-32	5
17-24	0
9-16	0
1-8	0

*Fifteen percent of the students in the tryout classes were non-participants in the program.

working within the last block of lessons appeared unlikely to complete the entire program by the time of the posttest.

Teacher Affect. Five of the six teacher questionnaire respondents felt that the program was appropriate for most of their children. All felt that the exercises were generally geared to the children's interests and rated the children's overall reaction to the program as fairly to very enthusiastic. All of the teachers stated thay would use the program again.

Time per Lesson. All teachers stated that lessons took less than 25 minutes with one teacher using less than an average of 15 minutes per lesson. In general it appeared that the time taken per lesson diminished as children progressed through the program until the final lessons in which length of time was controlled by how much and how long the children wanted to write.

Teacher's Guide. Four of the six respondents felt that the teacher directions for each lesson were clear and helpful as was the Teacher's Guide itself. The other two respondents stated that they had used neither the directions specific to each lesson nor the Teacher's Guide.

DISCUSSION AND REVISIONS

The pupil performance data on editing outcomes (Outcomes 3-7) indicated that the exercises were fairly successful in teaching most of the skills assessed when they occurred in the context of a single-sentence response as in the sentence-dictation data (Table 1). However, when students were required to edit for outcomes 4, 5, and 7 in responses

longer than a single sentence in length, as in their posttest stories (Table 3), there was no difference between the performance of students in tryout and comparison classes. This may be due in part to two facts: 1) direct instruction on the correction of run-on sentences, sentence fragments, and sentence strings was not presented, and 2) the lessons most directly applicable to the practice of this skill, i.e. those requiring the student to write responses longer than a single sentence in length and then to proofread his writing, did not occur until relatively late in the program, after Lesson 55. (There are 64 lessons in the program.) Only 45 percent of the students tested reached these lessons.

The data on the average number of words and sentences written by tryout students in their posttest compositions (Outcome 1, Table 2) also appears to have been affected by the fact that more than half of the tryout students tested had not completed the program. Although writing fluency was promoted throughout the program, the posttest composition task required multiple-sentence responses comparable only to the responses required in the program after Lesson 55. The ability of tryout students to write longer posttest compositions than did the students in comparison classes is evidence of the efficacy of the fluency instruction throughout the program. However the failure of 55 percent of the students tested to reach lessons giving instruction on composing multiple sentences is reflected in the poor performance of students in this tryout (32 words, 2.9 sentences per composition) when compared with that of students in previous tryouts (71 words, 9.1 sentences per composition) for whom the average proportions of the

program completed were greater.

The superior achievement by the tryout students on ratings of overall quality, originality, and organization (Outcome 2, Table 4) and the larger percentage of them using recognizable criteria for organizing their stories (Outcome 2, Table 5) may be assumed to be largely an incidental effect of the instruction on fluency and technical accuracy. These global outcomes received very little direct instructional attention. It would appear that although students may possess competencies in the fields of originality or organization, it is impossible to accurately assess their ability as applied to story writing until a minimal level of writing fluency has been achieved. Once students are writing compositions at least several sentences in length, it becomes possible to assess existing abilities and to begin instruction to perfect them.

The data provided by the 1971-72 tryout of the SWRL Level 2 Composition Skills Program corroborated the data from preceding tryouts concerning the overall effectiveness of the program and provided additional data for program revision. On the basis of the data collected during this tryout the following program revisions will be made:

1) The sequence of 64 stories will be revised and organized into five units containing 12 lessons each, the last lesson in each unit being a progress check designed to identify students who have not mastered the outcomes introduced in the unit. Teachers will be instructed to give students having

difficulty with selected outcomes additional practice on the outcomes.

2) Editing outcomes will be introduced more explicity and opportunities for practice more systematically provided according to detailed lesson specifications.

3) The sequence for promoting fluency will follow the same progression but will be accelerated so that instruction requiring multiple-sentence responses will begin by Lesson 42.

4) Units 4 and 5 will provide explicit instructional emphasis on planning and organization.

5) The Teacher's Guide and instructional procedures have been revised to reflect the above program revisions (For revised guide, see Appendix E.)

In addition, use of the SWRL Composition Skills Program will be made independent of any specific reading program. The Program will be rewritten to be coordinate with the SWRL Reading Program word base. Composition Skills Program story plots and characters will continue to be exclusive to the program.

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APPENDIX A

PROCEDURES USED BY TEST ADMINISTRATOR

FORM 2

FIRST GRADE COMPOSITION SKILLS TEST

PART I

Directions:

-Give each child a pencil and answer sheet.
-Tell the children that they are going to practice writing.
-Ask each child to put his name on his answer sheet.
-Tell the children that you are going to read them some sentences.
-Explain that they should try to write the sentences as you read them.
-Tell the children that they should try to write and spell each word as best they can.
-Ask the children to listen carefully, as you will say each sentence only two times.
-Begin reading each sentence. Say the words slowly once. Wait about 5 seconds, then repeat the sentence.
-Check that the children are writing on the appropriate line.

---

1. She fell.
2. He is Sam.
3. Is she sad?
4. I sat on the hill.
5. Will Nat win?

PART II

Directions:

-Ask the children to turn to the next page.
-Explain that they are going to write a story about the picture at the top of the page.
-Read the following introduction to the children. Do not elaborate on this introduction.

> Ann and Bud appear to be going away. Write a story about where they are going, what they will do once they get there, and why they seem to be so happy. Include some things that Ann and Bud say to each other while in the car.

-Point out the first line and explain that they should write the title of their story on it before they begin actually writing the story.
-After 15 minutes tell the children to stop. Read them the following directions:

> Stop writing.
> Go back and read your story to yourself. If you find mistakes, change them to make them right.

-Wait 3 minutes, and then collect all the papers.

APPENDIX B

TEACHER_____
DATE_____
EXAMINER_____

PUPIL PREFERENCE INVENTORY
LEVEL 2 OF THE COMPOSITION SKILLS PROGRAM
Control Group

Directions

I. Make the child feel at ease.
II. Then say, "I AM GOING TO ASK YOU SOME EASY QUESTIONS ABOUT THE THINGS YOU DO IN SCHOOL."
III. For each item below, ask the series of three questions (a,b,c,), and record the child's responses. If the child responds negatively to the first question ("IN SCHOOL THIS YEAR DID YOU EVER...?"), try to determine if he really hasn't participated in the activity or simply fails to recognize it from the description given.

	a) IN SCHOOL THIS YEAR DID YOU EVER...?		b) DO YOU LIKE TO,..?		c) DO YOU LIKE IT...?		
	yes	no	yes	no	A WHOLE LOT,	A LOT, or	JUS OK
1. WRITE WORDS?	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
2. LISTEN TO OTHER BOYS AND GIRLS SHARE THINGS THEY'VE BROUGHT TO SCHOOL?	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
3. WRITE SENTENCES?	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
4. READ STORIES?	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
5. WRITE A STORY THAT TELLS ABOUT A PICTURE?	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
6. DRAW PICTURES WITH CRAYONS OR PAINT?	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
7. MAKE UP TITLES FOR THE STORIES YOU WRITE?	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
8. WRITE YOUR NAME?	___	___	___	___	___	___	___

TEACHER_____
DATE_____
EXAMINER_____

PUPIL PREFERENCE INVENTORY
LEVEL 2 OF THE COMPOSITION SKILLS PROGRAM
Tryout Group

Directions

I. Make the child feel at ease.
II. Then say, "I AM GOING TO ASK YOU SOME EASY QUESTIONS ABOUT THE THINGS YOU DO IN SCHOOL."
III. For each item below, ask the series of three questions (a,b,c), and record the child's responses. If the child responds negatively to the first question ("IN SCHOOL THIS YEAR DID YOU EVER...?"), try to determine if he really hasn't participated in the activity or simply fails to recognize it from the description given.

	a) IN SCHOOL THIS YEAR DID YOU EVER...?		b) DO YOU LIKE TO...?		c) DO YOU LIKE IT...?		
	yes	no	yes	no	A WHOLE LOT,	A LOT,	or JUST OK
1. WRITE WORDS?	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
2. WRITE WORDS THAT FIT INTO SENTENCES LIKE THESE? (Show Stories 5 & 12)	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
3. LISTEN TO OTHER BOYS AND GIRLS SHARE THINGS THEY'VE BROUGHT TO SCHOOL?	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
4. WRITE SENTENCES?	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
5. CHOOSE WORDS AND WRITE THEM IN THE NUMBERED SPACES LIKE THESE? (Show Stories 17 & 26.)	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
6. READ STORIES?	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
7. WRITE A STORY THAT TELLS ABOUT A PICTURE?	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
8. WRITE YOUR OWN WORDS IN SPACES TO FINISH SENTENCES LIKE THESE? (Show Stories 35 & 44.)	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
9. DRAW PICTURES WITH CRAYONS OR PAINT?	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
10. MAKE UP TITLES FOR THE STORIES YOU WRITE?	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
11. WRITE STORIES ON PAPERS LIKE THIS? (Show Stories 61 & 64.)	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
12. WRITE YOUR NAME?	___	___	___	___	___	___	___

APPENDIX C

SWRL SECOND-YEAR COMPOSITION SKILLS PROGRAM

Spring, 1972

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

The SWRL Second-Year Composition Skills Program is still being developed and refined. In order that we may evaluate and further improve the program, it is essential that we obtain your comments, criticisms, and suggestions with this questionnaire. Thank you.

1. Please indicate the last exercise completed by your children. (If your children were not grouped, please complete Group 1 only.)
   Group 1: 7-23 children; Story 50-64
   Group 2: 2-9 children; Story 39-64
   Group 3: 5-9 children; Story 25-50
   Group 4: 3 children; Story 38
   Non-participants: 6-17 children

2. Is the program appropriate for most of your children?
   5 yes 1 no

3. What was the overall reaction of your class to the program?
   4 very enthusiastic ____ fairly unenthusiastic
   2 fairly enthusiastic ____ very unenthusiastic
   ____ neutral

4. How long was each lesson, on the average?
   1 less than 15 minutes ____ 25 to 35 minutes
   5 15 to 25 minutes ____ more than 35 minutes

5. Were the teacher directions for each exercise clear and helpful to administering the lessons?
   4 yes ____ no 2 did not use

6. Was the Teacher's Guide clear and complete?
   4 yes ____ no 2 did not use

7. Were the stories generally enjoyable and interesting to the children?
   6 yes _____ no

8. What proportion of your class was able to complete most of the lessons independently?
   5 more than 80%
   1 60% to 80%
   _____ 40% to 60%
   _____ 20% to 40%
   _____ less than 20%

9. Would you use the program again?
   6 yes _____ no

10. Please write below specific comments, criticisms, or suggestions not already covered. You may want to comment on individual exercises, the sequence of the exercises, illustrations, or specific problems you encountered.

APPENDIX D

Table 1a. Pretest and Posttest Percentage Distribution of Correct Responses on Editing Outcomes as Measured Through Dictated Sentences for First-Grade Tryout and Comparison Classes in Four School Districts

Outcome Measured	District A*				District B				District C				District D			
	Tryout		Comparison		Tryout		Comparison		Tryout		Comparison		Tryout		Comparison	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
3. Spacing	90	80	82	88	46	92	68	88	30	68	0	16	0	66	18	42
4. Sentence Complete	94	100	78	96	56	100	64	98	38	100	0	20	16	70	28	38
5. Initial Capitalization: Sentences	68	74	60	68	50	98	36	84	28	68	0	36	30	50	42	54
6. Capitalization: Proper Names	65	85	30	35	15	90	15	20	67	55	0	0	0	12	0	8
7. Ending Punctuation	20	68	18	34	0	66	0	46	0	54	0	0	1	0	0	0
Number of subjects	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10

Number of items responded to by each subject on each editing outcome: sentence complete, 5; spacing, 5; initial capitalization, 5; capitalization of proper names, 2; ending punctuation, 5.

*A = white upper-middle-income suburban
B = white lower-middle-income suburban
C = bilingual (Spanish-English) lower-income inner-city
D = black lower-income inner-city

Table 2a. Pretest and Posttest Means and Standard Deviations of Total Words and Sentences in Stories Written by First-Grade Tryout and Comparison Classes in Four School Districts

	Outcome Measured		District A*				District B				District C				District D			
			Tryout		Comparison		Tryout		Comparison		Tryout		Comparison		Tryout		Comparison	
			Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
1.	Number of Words	$\bar{X}$	11.70	25.60	12.60	33.90	2.50	34.10	20.90	47.60	1.10	53.00	0.00	0.00	1.60	14.40	5.90	13.60
		s.d.	3.77	9.15	7.24	14.84	3.07	12.48	4.72	21.63	1.64	30.01	0.00	0.00	3.90	6.10	5.22	8.55
1.	Number of Sentences	$\bar{X}$	1.50	3.00	1.60	3.60	.50	5.20	1.50	5.20	.40	2.10	0.00	0.00	.20	1.30	1.70	2.00
		s.d.	.92	1.26	.66	2.46	.50	2.93	.92	5.42	.49	1.30	0.00	0.00	.40	.64	1.27	1.34
	number of subjects		10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10

*A = white upper-middle-income suburban
B = white lower-middle-income suburban
C = bilingual (Spanish-English) lower-income inner-city
D = black lower-income inner-city

Table 3a. Pretest and Posttest Percentages of Complete Sentences, Sentence Strings, Sentence Fragments, and Run-On Sentences in Stories Written by First-Grade Tryout and Comparison Classes in Four School Districts

Outcome Measured	District A*				District B				District C				District D			
	Tryout		Comparison		Tryout		Comparison		Tryout		Comparison		Tryout		Comparison	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
4. Complete Sentences	60	77	69	67	60	71	27	81	0	38	0	0	0	38	35	50
5., 7. Sentence Strings	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	0	0	14	0	0	0	0	0	0
4. Sentence Fragments	20	0	19	3	40	19	33	8	100	19	0	0	50	15	59	40
5., 7. Run-On Sentences	20	23	12	31	0	4	33	12	0	29	0	0	50	46	6	10
number of subjects	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10

*A = white upper-middle-income suburban
B = white lower-middle-income suburban
C = bilingual (Spanish-English) lower-income inner-city
D = black lower-income inner-city

Table 4a. Pretest and Posttest Percentage Distribution of Subjective Ratings of Quality, Originality and Organization of Stories Written by First-Grade Tryout and Comparison Classes in a White Upper-Middle-Income Suburban District

	Tryout						Comparison					
	Pretest			Posttest			Pretest			Posttest		
Ratings	Overall Quality	Originality	Organization	Overall Quality	Originality	Organization	Overall Quality	Originality	Organization	Overall Quality	Originality	Organization
5 Excellent	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	0
4 Good	0	0	0	20	50	30	0	0	0	10	60	10
3 Fair	0	0	0	50	40	50	0	10	20	50	20	60
2 Somewhat Inadequate	50	40	60	30	0	0	70	40	20	30	0	30
1 Extremely Inadequate	40	50	30	0	10	20	20	30	50	10	10	0
0 No Response	10	10	10	0	0	0	10	20	10	0	0	0
number of Ss	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
coefficient of agreement	.89	.91	.88	.91	.87	.86	.89	.91	.88	.91	.87	.86

Table 4a. Pretest and Posttest Percentage Distribution of Subjective Ratings of Quality, Originality and Organization of Stories Written by First-Grade Tryout and Comparison Classes in a White Lower-Middle-Income Suburban District

	Tryout						Comparison					
	Pretest			Posttest			Pretest			Posttest		
Ratings	Overall Quality	Originality	Organization	Overall Quality	Originality	Organization	Overall Quality	Originality	Organization	Overall Quality	Originality	Organization
5 Excellent	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	0
4 Good	0	0	0	0	30	30	0	0	0	10	40	20
3 Fair	20	0	0	70	50	30	0	0	0	60	30	30
2 Somewhat Inadequate	0	20	0	30	20	40	40	30	40	10	20	30
1 Extremely Inadequate	10	10	30	0	0	0	50	60	50	20	0	20
0 No Response	70	70	70	0	0	0	10	10	10	0	0	0
number of Ss	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
coefficient of agreement	.89	.91	.88	.91	.87	.86	.89	.91	.88	.91	.87	.86

Table 4a. Pretest and Posttest Percentage Distribution of Subjective Ratings of Quality, Originality and Organization of Stories Written by First-Grade Tryout and Comparison Classes in a Bilingual (Spanish-English) Lower-Income Inner-City District

	Tryout						Comparison					
	Pretest			Posttest			Pretest			Posttest		
Ratings	Quality	Originality	Organization	Overall Quality	Originality	Organization	Overall Quality	Originality	Organization	Overall Quality	Originality	Organization
5 Excellent	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4 Good	0	0	0	0	60	30	0	0	0	0	0	0
3 Fair	0	0	0	50	30	20	0	0	0	0	0	0
2 Somewhat Inadequate	0	0	0	50	10	30	0	0	0	0	0	0
1 Extremely Inadequate	10	0	0	0	0	20	0	0	0	0	0	0
0 No Response	90	100	100	0	0	0	100	100	100	100	100	100
number of Ss	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
coefficient of agreement	.89	.91	.88	.91	.87	.86	.89	.91	.88	.91	.87	.86

Table 5a. Pretest and Posttest Percentages of Types of Organization in Stories Written by First-Grade Tryout and Comparison Classes in Four School Districts

Type	District A*				District B				District C				District D			
	Tryout		Comparison		Tryout		Comparison		Tryout		Comparison		Tryout		Comparison	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Chronological	50	90	50	70	0	70	40	70	0	80	0	0	0	60	0	50
Spatial	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Plot	0	0	0	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Argument	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	0
Other	30	10	40	20	30	30	50	30	0	20	0	0	10	40	30	50
None	10	0	10	0	70	0	10	0	100	0	100	100	90	0	60	0
number of Ss	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
coefficient	.92	.87	.92	.87	.92	.87	.92	.87	.92	.87	.92	.87	.92	.87	.92	.87

*A = white upper-middle-income suburban
B = white lower-middle-income suburban
C = bilingual (Spanish-English) lower-income inner-city
D = black lower-income inner-city

APPENDIX E

TEACHER'S GUIDE

SWRL COMPOSITION SKILLS PROGRAM LEVEL 2

The SWRL Composition Skills Program is designed to promote the basic planning, writing and editing skills of primary-grade children. Level 2 of the four-level program focuses on systematically developing the children's skills in the mechanics of writing and on increasing the children's writing fluency until they can plan and construct short stories several sentences in length.

OUTCOMES

The Level 2 Program promotes the following planning, writing and editing skills:

Planning

Story Planning. Plans story endings, given setting, characters and beginning; later plans details of entire story, given a one- to two-sentence story summary.

Writing

Fluency. Increases the number of words and sentences used in writing stories.

Handwriting. Prints sentences with adequate spacing between words.

Sentence Accuracy. Increases the proportion of well-formed sentences; avoids sentence fragments.

Capitalization. Capitalizes initial letters of sentences, proper names, personal address forms (Mr., Mrs., Dr., Miss) and each word in a story title.

Punctuation. Ends a sentence with a period or question mark; ends personal address forms with a period.

Indentation. Indents the first line of a story.

Editing

Editing. Rereads and corrects compositions for word-spacing, well-formed sentences, capitalization, ending punctuation, indentation, and spelling.

MATERIALS AND PROGRAM ORGANIZATION

Instruction and practice on the program outcomes are provided by 60 carefully sequenced pupil exercises. Each exercise is from two to four pages long and requires from 20 to 30 minutes of class time. The 60 exercises are organized into five units of 12 exercises each. The last exercise in each unit is a progress check which assesses the end-of-unit achievement of each child. All exercises contain teacher directions at the top of the first page.

During the initial exercises, children select and fill in words to complete sentences corresponding to illustrated stories. The exercises systematically progress, until by the end of the program (Unit 5), the children are creating and writing their own stories several sentences in length. Throughout the 60 exercises, careful attention is given to the development of the previously listed skill-outcomes, such as capitalization and punctuation.

Included with the 60 pupil exercises are Word List Booklets which alphabetically list the words used in the program. The booklets are introduced in Unit 3 to broaden the children's writing vocabularies and to help the children when they are editing their stories for correct spelling.

SCHEDULING

Because it is important that the children have an opportunity to complete the entire program during the school year and attain all of the outcomes, schedule two exercises per week and allow six weeks to complete each of the five units. This means that the exer-

. Teacher Monitoring. During exercises which introduce a new skill or lesson format, circulate among the children to help those who are having difficulty. As the exercises become more complex, it may be necessary to give increased explanation and individual help.

. Independent Work. Many children will be able to complete exercises independently after working through the first two or three sentences with them. This allows for time to work with children who need additional help and instruction.

. Correct Answers. When children begin writing in their own words for the stories in Unit 3, use of a single word or phrase is often very heavily suggested by the immediately preceding sentences. Although this is the case, children should not be corrected for using another word or phrase if it is appropriate to the context of the story. Increased numbers of divergent answers may be expected as work through the program progresses and allowance should be made for this in the correction of papers.

. Spelling. When children begin writing in their own words for the stories in Unit 3 and throughout the rest of the program, they should be encouraged to sound out words and write them as best they can without constant referral to the teacher or to their SWRL Word List Booklets. Correct spelling should be emphasized only after children have initially completed an exercise, when they are going back and checking (editing) their work. Only at this time should the children use their SWRL Word List Booklets to check their stories for correct spelling.

. Story Planning. When exercises require children to write parts of stories or entire stories (Units 4 through 5), help the children with story planning. Give the children a preliminary overview of the story from the illustrations or story summary, and then tell them to think about what they will write for their stories. Then ask three or four children to tell the class what they are planning to say in their stories. Discourage the children from either (1) giving extremely short answers which do not expand on the story idea or (2) talking indefinitely without bringing the story to a conclusion.

. Editing. After the children have completed an exercise, they should be directed always to proofread and correct their papers before having the teacher look at them. Linguistic research has shown that children can usually identify and correct most of their grammatical errors and omissions in this manner. To establish proofreading as a common procedure, editing skills must be done consistently.

cises should begin early in the school year, by mid-October at the latest. If the program is started late, the number of exercises per week should be increased.

It is best to schedule a definite 25-minute period for the exercises on two regularly specified days each week. Many teachers find that the most convenient time to do this is during grouped reading instruction. The procedure usually followed is to introduce the lesson according to the directions printed on the first page with the group or the class. After the introduction, the children work through the first page of the exercise with the teacher, before returning to their seats to complete the exercise independently. In this way, children having problems can be identified and aided. After the children have completed the exercise, five to ten minutes should be allowed for feedback and correction; this can be done on the same day or at the start of the following session.

TEACHING PROCEDURES

Specific teaching procedures are written on each exercise. In addition, there are important general teaching procedures which are applicable to all lessons in the program. Many of the teaching procedures, both general and lesson-specific, were suggested by classroom teachers when using the exercises during the development of the program. These procedures have been found to be critical to pupil learning and program success. It will be necessary to refer to them often during the first few exercises. These procedures are:

. Correction and Follow-Up. As soon as possible after a child has completed an exercise, he should correct his errors. These errors can be identified by either reading and marking the child's paper or by going over it individually with the child and pointing out errors. Either way, correction should take place as soon as possible. There are a number of suitable times to identify errors on children's papers.

a. Show children their errors while the exercise is in progress, and have them correct those errors immediately.

b. Mark the errors and return the exercises to the children immediately or at the following session so that corrections can be made at that time.

c. Go over errors with the children while they are in the reading circle and have them make corrections.

. Positive Examples. Use well-written or interesting compositions as models for the rest of the class by having them read aloud or placing them where other children can read them.

. Praise. Praise individual children, the group, or the class whenever they do well on an exercise. Try to find something good about each child's writing during the course of the program. Encourage the children not only to write correctly, but to use their imaginations and enjoy writing.

. Progress Checks. The Progress Checks at the end of each unit are designed to identify children needing further practice on the material taught in the unit. The exercises are constructed to assist in identifying the outcomes on which the children need more practice. Additional practice on outcomes can be provided in the following ways:

a. by using extra copies of the exercises that deal with the outcome with which the children are having difficulty.

b. by making up exercises (chalkboard word or dittoed exercises) that deal with the outcomes with which the children are having difficulty.

c. by dictating short sentences for the children to write. (This is good practice for the capitalization and punctuation outcome.)

d. by having the children write stories independently on lined paper.

SOME COMMON CONCERNS OF TEACHERS

1. Will children have problems reading the stories in the exercises?

   The word base of the Composition Skills Program is composed mostly of regularly spelled words. Children possessing the word-attack skills of sounding out and blending should have little trouble reading the stories in the exercises. A Level 2 Entry Skills Test is available to determine which children possess the reading skills required for Level 2.

2. Why do you say not to insist on correct spelling the first time the child writes a story?

   It is important not to inhibit children from expanding their written vocabulary by insisting on correct spelling during the initial writing of a story. Spelling should be emphasized when the children are editing their completed stories.

3. At what grade level should Level 2 of the Composition Skills Program be used?

   The various levels of the Composition Skills Program are not tied to specific grade levels, but to the skills of the children. When the child demonstrates that he can handle the reading and printing tasks required for Level 2, then he is able to start. As was previously mentioned, a Level 2 Entry Skills Test is available to help make the proper placement decision.

4. What evidence is there that this program really works?

   The Level 2 Composition Skills Program has undergone development and tryout for three years. During this time the program has been used in over 30 classes containing more than 1000 pupils from a wide range

of economic and cultural backgrounds. Tests which measure writing fluency and mechanics have been used to assess the achievement levels of students using the program. In all cases, students who have used the SWRL Level 2 Composition Skills Program have been shown to have reached a higher level of achievement than have comparable students following the regular school curriculum.

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